

Meeting Minutes, 4/25/07

Committee for Citizen Involvement

CCI Members Present: Rex Caffall, Basil Christopher, Bev Froude, Brian Kelly, Stacie Yost

CCI Members Absent: Sue Carver

Staff Present: Ron Bunch, Marissa Daniels, Duane Roberts, and Darren Wyss

1. Welcome and Introductions

Chair Basil Christopher called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Basil asked for several clarifications related to the “comprehensive plan” portion of the minutes, including the list of organizations included in the outreach list.

3. Oregonian Reporter

My-Thuan Tran began by stating that she is the *Oregonian* reporter who covers the Cities of Tigard and Tualatin. After giving some personal history, she explained that her beat includes “everything going on” in the two cities. She added that she writes from the perspective of local residents with an interest in “what’s going on.” She writes for the Metro section of the newspaper and for its *SW Weekly* pullout, which covers Tigard, Tualatin, and Sherwood. The test for whether a Metro story is newsworthy is whether it is significant enough to be of interest to readers living outside Tigard. *SW Weekly* features stories specific to Tigard and the two other cities. The water district election and Tigard’s Downtown redevelopment plan are examples of recent Tigard-related stories appearing in *SW Weekly*. Listings of City-sponsored events are published in the *SW Weekly* calendar of events.

My-Thuan emphasized that she likes to receive phone calls and e-mails about leads or story ideas.

Bev commented that the *SW Weekly* is an important forum for local events and activities. Brian asked My-Thuan whether event information should be sent to her or to her editor. My-Thuan responded that she is the primary contact person, and that when providing event information it is useful to include a brief note or voice message describing the event. She informed the group that a newspaper web site for each county is due for roll-out soon. These will provide another place to post event information.

The *SE Weekly* includes what she called a “destination paper,” a group of stories that focus on the same place or topic. Tigard is scheduled to be featured in the September issue. This issue will contain stories that profile the City, Downtown rehabilitation, and various community volunteers.

In response to a question, My-Thuan explained that some of her story ideas, among many other sources, come from the police. But she made clear that she is not the daily crime reporter.

Basil stated that the newspaper can be a mechanism for public involvement. Town halls and open houses are good mechanisms for informing the public about an issue or activity. Ron commented that he had worked in several communities that make use of citizens to advise elected officials. If there is a need to discuss an issue, the town hall or focus group usually is the most effective forum. Citizen involvement groups are expected to advise staff and Council on how to use public involvement mechanisms and on the most appropriate approach to use for a particular activity. Another role or mission of the public involvement group is to provide advice on how to build civic capacity. Citizens have a responsibility for civic engagement. Helping to maintain a sense of civic capacity and building pride in the community is not an easy thing to do. Building civic capacity can take years. The neighborhood group is one way to promote engagement in community. The implementation of public involvement is that it is both process- and outcome-based.

Beverly noted that some issues are not citywide issues, but all neighborhoods need to be involved in the resolution of both neighborhood-level and city-wide issues.

Ron commented that the development of the comprehensive plan provides the CCI an opportunity to work with staff to come up with public involvement policies for inclusion in the plan. Brian stated that this is an opportunity to have a major impact.

Addressing My-Thuan’s question to the group regarding what things could be highlighted more in the Oregonian’s coverage of Tigard, Ron mentioned an emphasis on the unique qualities of the community and its unique and talented people. The common theme is identity. Others mentioned City-sponsored events. Basil pointed out that it is important to be aware of the need for advance notice in working with the newspapers.

Basil suggested inviting an expert in public involvement to provide training for the CCI. Ron asked the group if it would like to invite the well known consultant, Elaine Cogan, for a training session on how the CCI can be more effective. The group supported this proposal.

4. Comprehensive Plan Public Involvement

Darren and Marissa introduced this item. They began by describing the outreach methods used to promote the two recent comprehensive plan public open houses held in the Library Community Room. The outreach included posters in the library and City Hall, public notice slides running on TVTV beginning three weeks before the first open house event, school district and CPO newsletter announcements, a City homepage feature story, and press releases. Personal invitations also were sent to all City board and committee members, Community Connectors, plus 37 community organizations and the 50 individuals on the comprehensive plan newsletter list. Spanish-language fliers were distributed through St. Anthony's Catholic Church. Altogether, an estimated 100 people attended the two open houses.

Attendees were handed welcome packets at the door. Every topic had a separate table and comment sheets. Bev added that the event was well organized, and she liked the organizers' idea of using comment cards to solicit feedback.

Although an interpreter was on-hand at both events, no Spanish speaker attended either event. Bev commented that many Latinos in Tigard live in apartments and, for this reason, may feel they have less of a stake in the community than residents who are homeowners. Brian commented that daily problems are more important than open houses. Marissa reported that the St. Anthony's Catholic Church Hispanic Outreach Minister, Jose Gutierrez, told her that the City and CCI didn't appear to have done anything to reach out to the Latino community since a year-ago panel discussion of Latino outreach. [Note: In May Duane met with Jose to review a list of nine CCI recommendations to Council for reaching out to under-represented groups and Council's response to each.] Brian commented on the need to do additional outreach. Ron noted the importance of having a diverse group at the table when discussing such comprehensive plan topics as public safety, housing, employment, and others.

Rex noted that all the available connections or service providers are located out in Hillsboro. Washington County needs to be encouraged to disperse social services and to work more closely with small cities. A non-resident becomes interested in becoming an American when that person begins to identify with the community.

Stacie commented that culturally speaking, participation in civic affairs is relationship based. Having someone sit at their table, in a manner of speaking, is how people become engaged. Brian pointed out that the real challenge is dealing with people working more than full-time.

Ron pointed out that someone who has connections in the community is more likely to become involved in civic affairs. Most people don't have time to participate. The City can extend invitations to the community and ask what the City can do to assist the community. You need a contact within a community group to make the

group feel it belongs. With respect to comprehensive plan public involvement, the solution is to deal with the leadership using the comprehensive plan as a vehicle.

Marissa explained that the next step in the comprehensive plan process is to ask people to sign up for policy interest teams. At the open houses, four people signed-up for the group reviewing citizen involvement policies.

Darren suggested that citizens interested in this topic could meet jointly with the CCI to review policies and action measures related to the public involvement component of the comprehensive plan. Staff would look to the expertise of the CCI to assist and lead in this area.

Bev suggested inviting Neighborhood Group representatives to the meeting as well. Ron commented on the need for a lasting core public involvement structure unique to Tigard. Darren asked about using the next CCI meeting to serve as the forum for the comprehensive plan public involvement policy review. He observed that a representative from the various pilot neighborhood organizations could be invited to take part in the meeting. The group consented to this suggestion.

5. CCI Bylaws and Membership

Duane introduced this topic. He passed out marked-up copies of Civic Center Action Committee bylaws for review. He used the CCAC bylaws as a model, because Council suggested that other boards and committees develop their own bylaws based on the Council-approved CCAC bylaws.

Duane identified the main bylaw issue as membership. At present the CCI is made up of representatives from other City boards and committees and from the small pool of former Citizen Involvement Team Facilitators. Although the CCI has lost no facilitators to date, the number of CCI members from other boards and committees has dwindled over time. At present, the Committee has no representative from the Parks Board, Tree Board, or Budget Committee. The water board also is no longer represented.

Duane also pointed out that the current structure of the committee includes no slots for at-large members.

Basil suggested the Committee contact Liz regarding the three pilot neighborhoods as a source of additional committee members. He suggested just one person from the pilot program, and not all three, be invited to join the CCI at this point. This is because it is important to have neighborhood input.

Darren spoke about his experience in the City of Eugene where a revolving representative from every neighborhood group served on a city-wide citizen

involvement committee. The group provided a conduit between the City and neighborhood groups without overwhelming volunteers with a burdensome time commitment.

Brian pointed out that there seems to be an ebb and flow to neighborhood participation. Darren added from his experience that when strong leadership leaves a particular group, the activity level of the group tends to decline.

Brian said he worried that if the Committee decides to make participation in the CCI a requirement for neighborhood group recognition, then overall participation in the neighborhood program may decline. Basil suggested the Committee asks Liz whether she feels this is a reasonable requirement. Bev suggested that Liz is trying to design the Neighborhood Program around fewer meetings. Even if a neighborhood group does not have anyone willing to serve on the CCI and attend regular meetings, the CCI should at least open lines of communication between the CCI and the Neighborhood volunteers by soliciting interest.

Darren shared that the City of Portland designates department liaisons, such as in transportation and public safety, for example, to meet with the neighborhoods so that the Community knows what is going on in that department in advance of particular projects or activities.

Brian stated that it is useful to continue having liaisons from other boards and committees even if they do not come to every meeting. This provides the CCI a designated contact regarding issues relating to that board or commission.

Bev thought members of other boards and committees should be encouraged to attend all the CCI meetings they wish to attend, but, at a minimum, they should agree to come when necessary.

In the interest of time, this agenda item was continued to the next meeting.

6. Other Business / Announcements / Next Agenda

Chair Basil Christopher adjourned the meeting at 8:49 PM.
